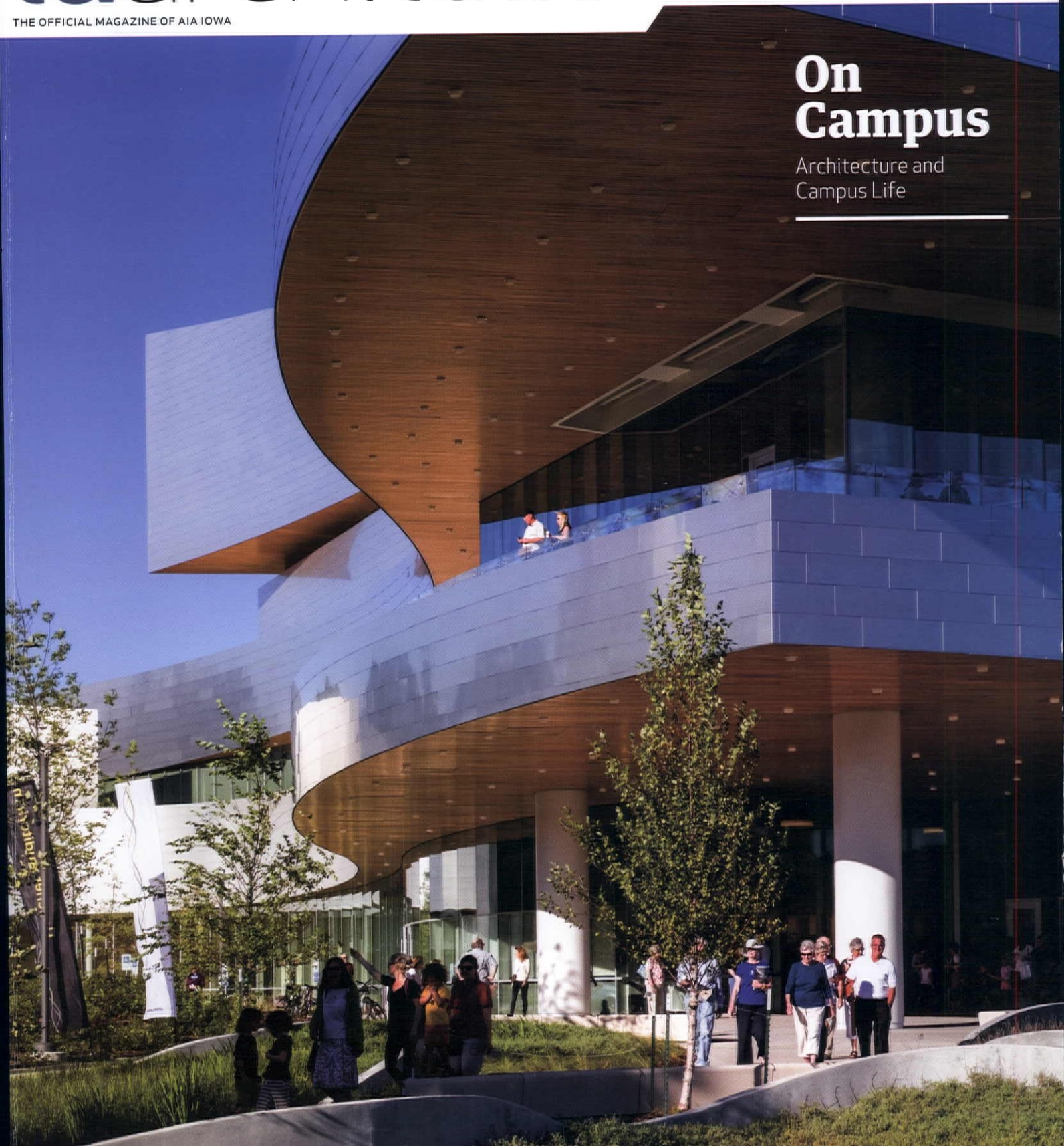


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editor's letter



Welcome!

The quality of the campus experience is an important factor in attracting, inspiring, and serving students, faculty, and staff at any university or college. The campus provides a sense of place, connectedness, and community that is so integral to a successful learning environment. Creating those places through architecture has its challenges. A theme that runs through many of the projects featured in this issue is adapting to ever-changing academic and social needs. As colleges and universities adopt new and better ways to educate students, accommodate a wider range of ways to learn, increase access to technology, and promote collaboration and innovation, the spaces central to any educational environment must also be reimaged.

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iaarchitect

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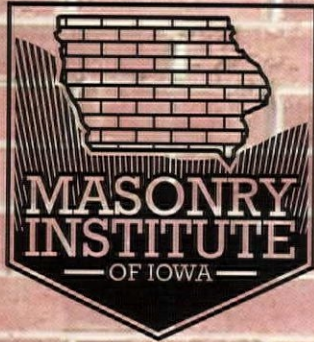
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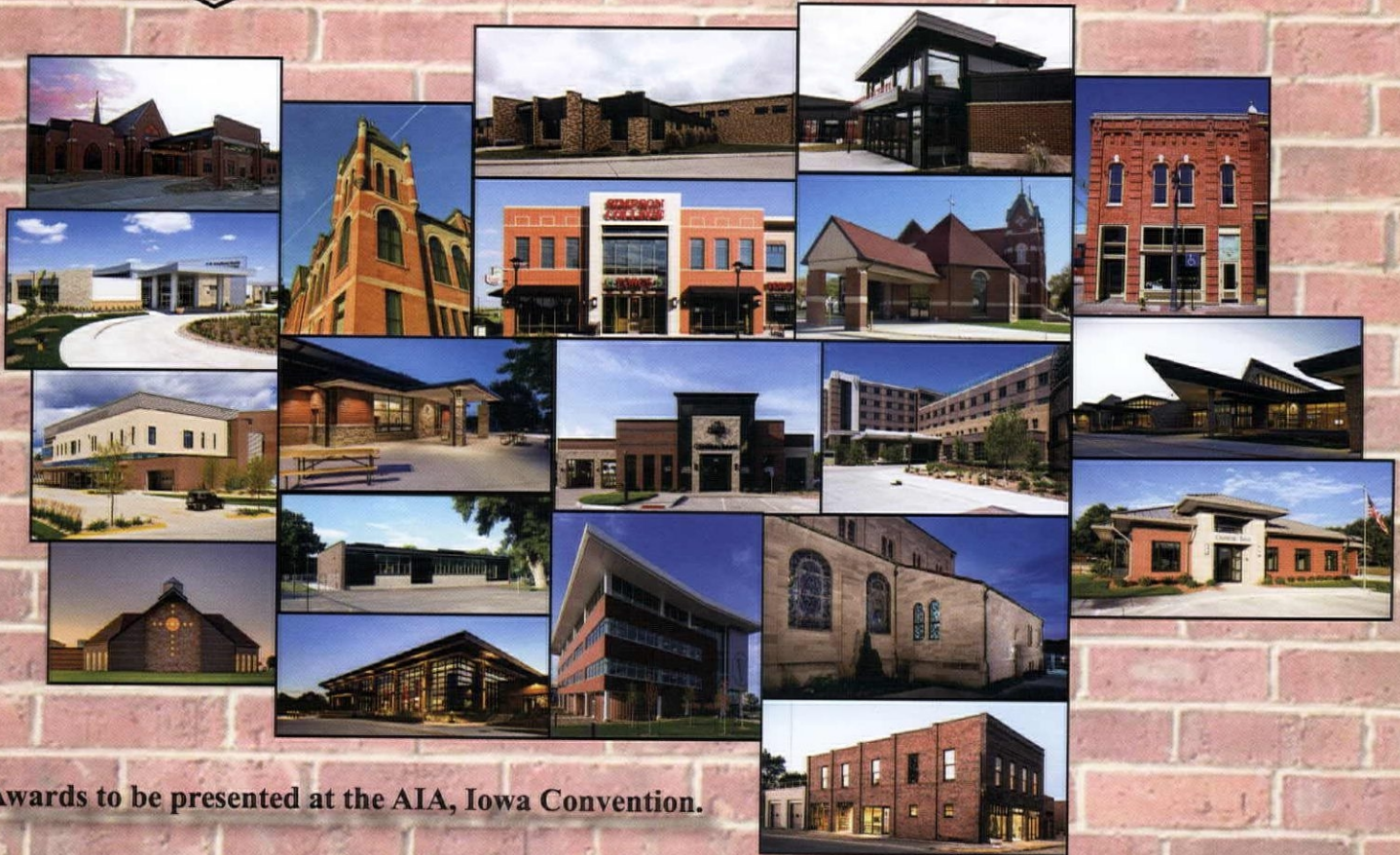
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Martin Garner Architecture

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Studio MELEE
SVPA Architects
Walker Coen Lorentzen Architects

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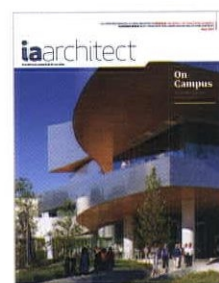
AIA Iowa Chapter members
dedicate time, talents to better
our communities

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AIA Iowa Citizen Architect

AIA Iowa Chapter members dedicate time, talents to better our communities

AIA Iowa recognizes the important contributions many of our members make through volunteer efforts in their communities. Design professionals have many skills that can benefit community efforts and AIA Iowa encourages members to lend their talents and time.

The Citizen Architect Program is divided into two tracks, Community and Advocacy. Participants in the Community track are AIA Iowa members who serve as an appointed or elected member of a governing body or serve as a volunteer leader for a non-profit organization that benefits people in need or a community and advocates for AIA Iowa's core principles of Quality Design, Sustainability, and Livable Communities. AIA Iowa members participating in the Advocacy track are engaged with their state legislators and local leaders and advocate for the profession.

Thank you to the 2017 AIA Iowa Citizen Architect Program participants!



Christy Monk, AIA, and Emily Hilgendorf, Assoc. AIA, volunteer for the Dubuque Historic Preservation Commission.



AIA Citizen Architect

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Projects
In Progress

Iowa State University Student Innovation Center

Iowa State University has a storied history of excellence in innovation and a strong reputation for sharing that excellence as part of its land grant mission; students need a 21st-century forum for testing, experimentation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. Student survey results pointed to a desire for more space to be available for teaming activities and, even more significantly, a space where they could easily access resources and expertise housed outside their home department or college. Industry groups, faculty, and staff detailed a number of cross-disciplinary projects that could thrive in a campus-wide incubator-like environment with ample space for students to explore ideas outside the bounds of conventional curricular structures. The Student Innovation Center designed by Substance Architecture and Kieran Timberlake will provide a flexible, dynamic space to encourage students from all colleges to experiment, collaborate, and engage in a free exchange of ideas. The facility will act as a node or hub for a network of innovative activity throughout the university. By creating both the physical environment and the administrative structure to support innovation, the facility aspires to fuel new and unimagined initiatives well into the future.



Ames, IA

Substance Architecture and Kieran Timberlake

Biechler Bridge



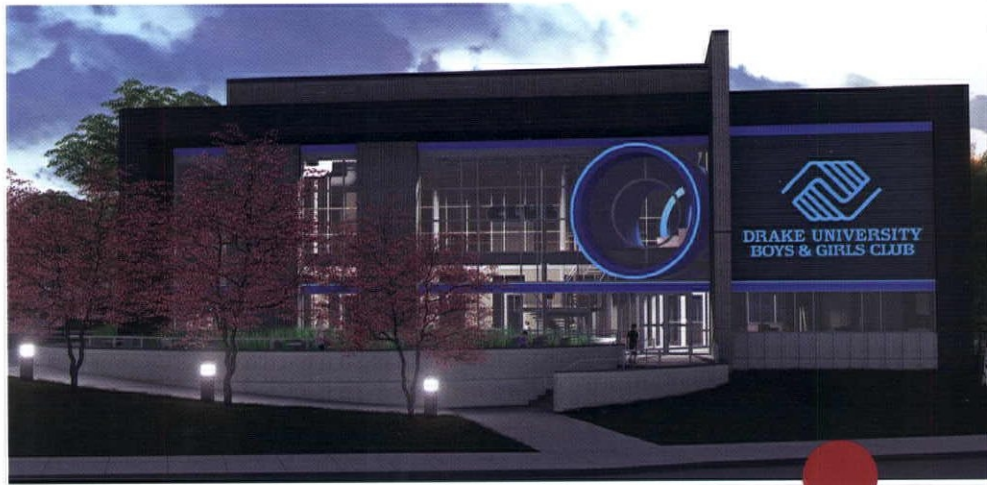
Cedar Rapids, IA

Shive Hattery Architecture-Engineering

Linn County is working with Shive Hattery Architecture-Engineering on a concept for a new pedestrian bridge that will span the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids. Named for retired Linn County Conservation director Dan Biechler, the bridge is designed to be a double-decker more than 800 feet in length. The proposal calls for reusing concrete piers from, and evoking the historical design of, the demolished Milwaukee Road railroad bridge. The top deck will be covered in prairie grasses, connecting the existing Rock Island Botanical State Preserve on the east bank to the western river bank, where a large area will be set aside for conservation, recreational use, and floodwater absorption.

Boys & Girls Club of Central Iowa at Drake University

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa wanted a new central facility to give children access to a safe, supportive place to use after school and during summer. Shive Hattery Architecture-Engineering explored various ways to provide learning pathways to different ages, interests, and activity levels. Two student populations – K-5th and 6th-12th grades – will be safely separated, even in shared spaces. The facility offers a secure, protected environment from potentially dangerous or disruptive external factors while providing a welcoming window to the world beyond. Once complete, this will be one of three Boys & Girls Club sites in the nation to be located on a private college campus. The project is currently seeking fundraising.



Des Moines, IA

Shive Hattery Architecture-Engineering



Linn County Public Health and Child and Youth Development Services Building

The new Linn County Public Health and Child and Youth Development Services building will be a multi-use 45,000- to 50,000-square-foot facility with the potential for future expansion on a 90,000-square-foot site in southeast Cedar Rapids. Because the building is used by both the departments of Public Health and Child and Youth Development Services, programming for

the new facility includes a diverse mix of classroom and childcare spaces, offices, meeting rooms, clinics, and lab spaces. The Department of Child and Youth Development Services offers childcare and preschool to the county's underserved, in-need population. It is also open to those students who for behavior reasons are not permitted to attend public schools. All services are paid for by the county.

The childcare center will be designed to create a calm and safe space that may be lacking in other parts of these children's lives. Outdoor space, including a green roof and a playground, promotes creative rather than prescriptive play, and will be available to the community after hours to use as a neighborhood park. The building will be designed for a LEED Platinum designation, with Net Zero aspirations.

Cedar Rapids, IA

OPN Architects

Managing the University Consultant Architects

As University Architect at the University of Iowa, Rod Lehnertz, AIA, knows what it takes to get good design on campus

WORDS : KELLY ROBERSON

A lifelong resident of Iowa City, Lehnertz began working for the University of Iowa in 1994 as an architect and project manager. In the nearly two-and-a-half decades since, he's seen dramatic changes in the landscape of campuses. Today, as Senior Vice President for Finance & Operations and University Architect, Lehnertz focuses on managing the planning and design efforts of the consultant architects hired by the university. We caught up with Lehnertz to get an insider's insights into the future of campus architecture.

Q: How does your role differ from that of a "traditional" architect?

A: When I told a fellow practicing architect that I was joining the University of Iowa, he asked whether I was ready to "leave the profession." Instead, I have found the interactions with consultant architects and while working side-by-side with luminaries in the profession, like Steven Holl, Cesar Pelli, and others, have given me an experience that is richly tied to the profession ... Seeing a campus mature and become what you have planned is very rewarding and unique in this profession.

Q: And the stakeholders are different, too – more diverse, and more of them?

A: [The] vast majority of the projects executed on our campus – more than 300 annually – are only noticeable to those directly impacted. Most of our

projects are smaller and directly tied to maintenance of a campus with an average building age of more than 45 years. Most in the public only recognize our larger projects, many of them new structures. In all cases, we balance the needs and communication requirements of a wide base of stakeholders ... We must first make sure that the rules and requirements at the Regent level and the State level are satisfied. [And] every project is different. Unlike many private owner environments, the table of stakeholders is large on campus. This can sometimes slow a project, but usually for good reason. The key is having the people at the table who represent the immediate project need, as well as those who will represent and care for that building [or] space for the next 100 years.

Q: Many people might be surprised at the length of time building projects take – it's about 10 years, correct?

A: This sounds like a long time. It is. The longest phase of a major project can often be the institutional vetting of a creative idea or need to create a new building. Once a project is ready to be advanced and the institution is behind the need for it, the university requests formal Board of Regents approval to advance planning. It is at this point that the selection of design consultants begins. Depending on the project type and size this can be local, national, relatively quick, or lengthy. The next formal threshold for a major project is the Board of Regents approval of schematic design and budget. By the

time we ask for this approval, we have completed programming and included a wide range of campus stakeholders. Each project is also tested for its fit with the various elements of the campus' master plan objectives. After this approval, the project team further develops the design, then advances the construction documents phase. The bidding process follows. A vast majority of the projects are bid publicly as a single package, with the lowest bidder awarded the construction contract. We do evaluate each project for its challenges and opportunities, and should a form of alternative bidding delivery afford greater value to the state, we consider it and confirm support from our Board of Regents.

Q: How do you balance the historic nature of a campus with a forward-thinking approach?

A: A great debate in collegiate campus architecture is context. Many campuses are driven by the typical university campus feel. Others stride toward free expression and an eclectic setting. Both are justified and each speaks to a different set of prospective students and the faculty and staff who choose to work there. At the UI, I feel we have established a meaningful mix of both ... The introduction of world-renown architects and iconic structures, many tied to our equally renown arts programs, added to our handsome campus the jewels that now make it so unique. We have developed a campus that is rich in history but also striving to communicate who we are, as a university and as a community; a campus that boldly declares our pride in being a place of creative endeavors. In many ways, the UI campus is a living, breathing, modern architectural history book.

Q: There are so many iconic structures on campus. What's one of your favorites?

A: Some would say that you either love or hate Steven Holl's 2006 Art Building West. I love it; it stands as one of my personal favorites. Holl created a thoroughly modern structure that at the same time honors the nearby original 1936 Art Building. The weathered Corten steel is oxidized to a rusted finish that very nearly matches the dark red brick façade of the art building that predated it by 70 years. The unique "yin and yang" feel of two buildings serving the history and future of a nationally noted Art & Art History program seems fitting. The building also perches daringly over a former limestone quarry – one of Iowa City's first, closed back in 1905 – and pond to create mesmerizing interactions between nature and a machine for creating art. And I think most importantly, the building, for all of its expression, is loved by those who use it every day. It was an ideal marriage of form and function.

Q: How does a university use architecture as an expression of its values and its mindset for the future?

A: I contend that the collection of architecture we host on the UI campus is the physical representation of the creativity that is so central to what we are within our broader community. At a time when we see the arts negatively impacted in so many ways, we continue to make it a core value and I think this is part of what makes being a part of this campus and community so special. And you can see this commitment everywhere, especially in our buildings.



"A great debate in collegiate campus architecture is context. Many campuses are driven by the typical university campus feel. Others stride toward free expression and an eclectic setting. Both are justified and each speaks to a different set of prospective students and the faculty and staff who choose to work there."

— ROD LEHNERTZ, AIA

I profile

Q: So how do you judge the success of buildings?

A: Architecture has always been that interesting intersection between the world of arts and the more pragmatic and measurable world of business. However, that also makes reaction to and measurement of architecture so difficult ... Beyond a building's appearance, there are certainly ways to measure a building's success, and as long-time stewards of a single place like a campus, we can and do measure success in many different ways. The many buildings that make up our campus are connected within our system of utilities and care. Our experts in these areas are constantly measuring performance and this performance has an absolute impact on the institution ... Use of a building often produces measurable information for us as well, and this data can help to inform future decisions. One specific example came after we modernized a major portion of the main library's first floor. The 24-hour electronic commons project was intended to address a changing student engagement with libraries, and we modeled many of the design decisions by learning from peer institution examples. The result? Prior to the project, the main

library hosted roughly 200,000 visitors each year. Following the project, we have climbed to more than 1.2 million visitors per year. I think a claim for whether a building and its design is good can often be summed up in how well the design form fits and impacts, in a good way, the functions that happen within. If a building is simply flashy and exciting but doesn't improve the teaching, learning, and research that happens inside, the building is just a billboard, and is not successful.

Q: So in over two decades, how have campuses changed, and what does the future hold?

A: The way students learn and experience class work and the teamwork they do between classes has changed almost every way we look at building programming and design ... An emerging theme in campus design is the importance of the spaces between the buildings, where previous generations centered on the isolated building itself. In the same way, there is an increasing emphasis on what students do in between their formal class time ... Students have become more mobile and expect place flexibility and time flexibility. These changes in student

behavior and expectations also drive our development of between-class offerings like wellness and fitness, with more participating in recreational activities than ever before. We are also seeing more students interested in living on campus beyond their first year, recognizing the benefits of the campus community and the connected nature of the residence halls. In an age when we see increasing options to get a degree from one's computer at home, the importance of place is never more critical. Life on a university campus like ours is not just about training for the job one envisioned when leaving high school, but about gaining the tools to take on more and more opportunities and challenges as life continues, to learn what effective communication and teamwork can accomplish, and to use the lessons and inspirations gained here to a strategic advantage, in an ever-more competitive working world. Our campus buildings, here now and those to come in the future, are to accommodate those wide-ranging ways to learn and it is my opinion that our creative and inspiring architecture is yet another source of inspiration that attracts and then benefits every student and faculty and staff member we host.

"Our campus buildings, here now and those to come in the future, are to accommodate those wide-ranging ways to learn and it is my opinion that our creative and inspiring architecture is yet another source of inspiration that attracts and then benefits every student and faculty and staff member we host."

— ROD LEHNERTZ, AIA



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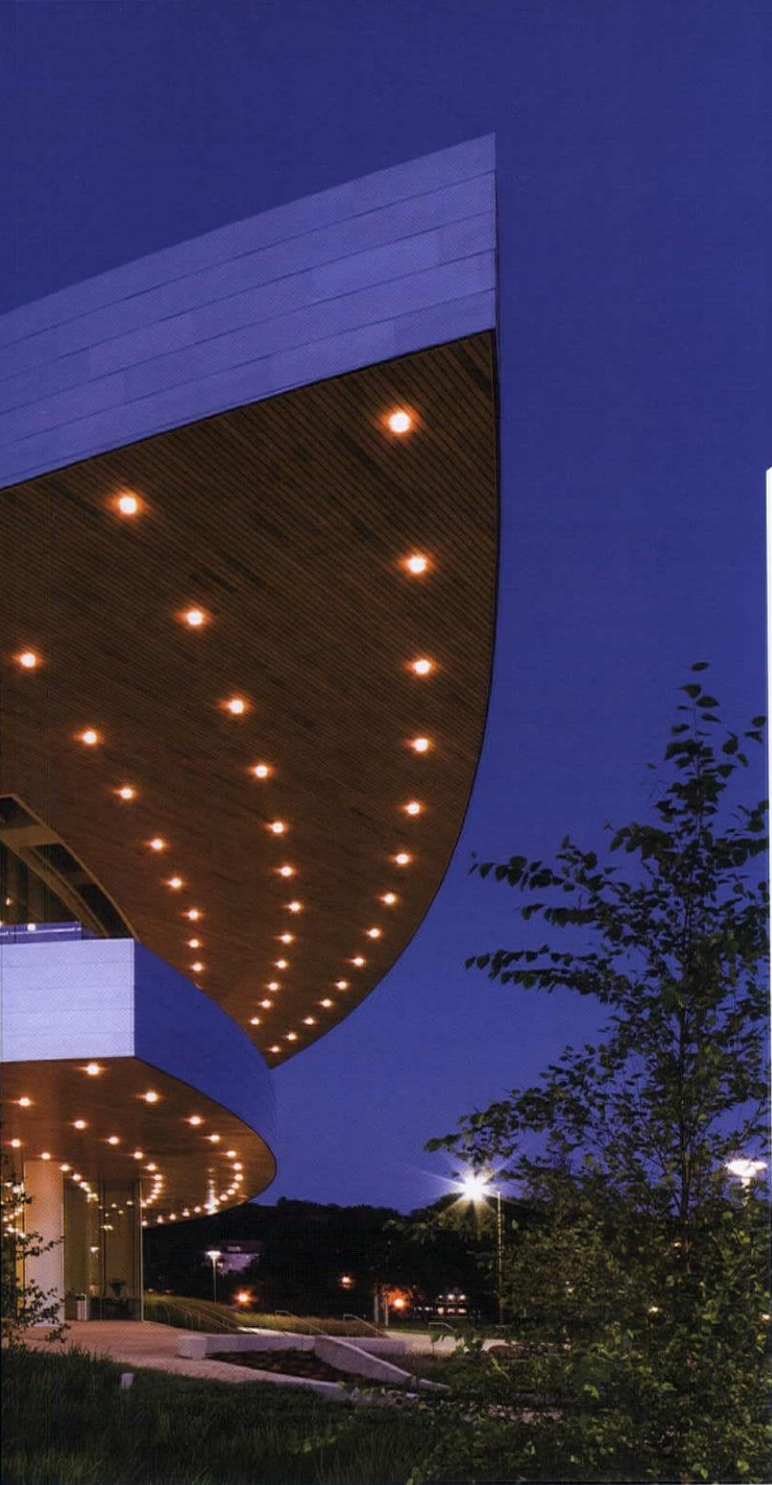
EIGHT YEARS AFTER THE FLOOD OF 2008 RAVAGED THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S HANCHER AUDITORIUM, OPN ARCHITECTS AND PELLI CLARKE PELLI BROUGHT IT BACK TO LIFE — THIS TIME, STRONGER THAN EVER

WORDS : HANNAH GILMAN

IMAGES : JEFF GOLDBERG

ARCHITECT : OPN ARCHITECTS IN COLLABORATION WITH PELLI CLARKE PELLI





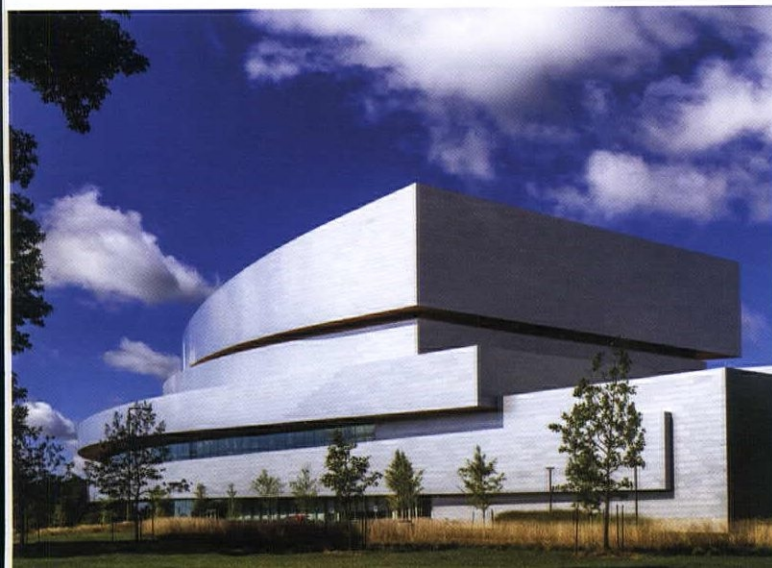
César Pelli compared the process of designing a performing arts hall to raising a child. “You nurture and love this child and watch them grow and then, at some point, you have to let them out into the world,” says Pelli.

On September 9, 2016, OPN Architects Principal Daniel Thies, AIA, finally understood what Pelli had described as the doors of Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa opened to the public. Eight years had passed since the Flood of 2008 desecrated eastern Iowa and shuttered one of Iowa’s best-known performing arts halls. Rushes of water overflowed river banks and broke through levees, destroying everything in its path: Homes. Businesses. Hancher Auditorium.

The original, built by famed architect Max Abramovitz, opened its doors in 1972. It was an icon not just for the University of Iowa, but for the community and the state as a whole. “Hancher as an institution and as a performing arts entity had a national reputation,” says Thies. “There really was this spirit about Hancher that was very compelling, and we wanted to make sure that was preserved and enhanced as we stepped into this period of redefining the space.” The best way to do that? Not necessarily through a physical manifestation of some aspect of the design, says Thies, so much as preserving that spirit.

When the University turned to architect-of-record OPN Architects and New Haven, Connecticut-based design architect Pelli Clarke Pelli (PCP) to take on the job, it laid out a clear set of objectives: responsibly replace an iconic piece of architecture with an equally iconic design while complementing its surroundings. Namely, the Levitt Center for University Advancement, which sits just adjacent to the new Hancher, and the Iowa River — the same one that wreaked havoc on the old Hancher.

“The 2008 flood was historic in more ways than I’m capable of describing,” says Thies. The building that houses OPN’s Cedar Rapids studio had more than eight feet of water coursing through the main level — it was overwhelmed by the flood just as Hancher was. “We had a very intimate understanding of



Top: The form of the cantilevered entrance complements the natural bend in the adjacent Iowa River. **Left:** A black box theatre provides rehearsal space and hosts smaller productions. **Center:** Floor-to-ceiling windows allow ample light to fill the interior gathering spaces and connect visitors to the expansive views of the Iowa River. **Right:** The design was scrutinized from every angle to create a building with no back.

what it takes to walk into a building after a flood and experience the aftermath, see the damage, and be completely inundated physically and emotionally with that sort of trauma,” says Thies, reflecting on the sight of once-beautiful Hancher coated with muck and littered with debris. But in the face of natural disaster, says Thies, was something beautiful: the people. “The thing that showed itself over and over and over again in the entire corridor and all the areas affected by the flood was this resilience and the galvanizing of people; the roll-up-your-sleeves attitude,” he says.

That went for everyone: designers, theater planners, visual experts, lighting designers, and the contractor, Mortenson Construction. And Hancher’s supporters, without whom there would be no Hancher. The College of Engineering’s Iowa Institute of Hydraulic Research – the instrumental force that consulted on the building’s 500-year-flood plan in the event Mother Nature shows her fury once again.

“Hancher touched every student on campus in some way, and the team was very deliberate about making sure campus had the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the design process.”

— DANIEL THIES, AIA

The team reached out to colleges across campus to make sure they understood that while the spaces within Hancher were designed around presenting artists and new work, they were also designed to be a laboratory for creative collaboration – for all. “Every student on campus had one time or another set foot in the original Hancher, whether it was for a performance, a presentation or graduation. Hancher touched every student on campus in some way, and the team was very deliberate about making sure campus had the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the design process,” says Thies.

After three years of research, there was a design. A new Hancher for a new era. A Hancher that would honor the Iowa River, and honor the community that built it. One that faced campus, and invited everyone in.

Three more years yet, there was a building.

The \$132-million, 189,000-square-foot performing arts center – funded by the university, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and private gifts – is dubbed a “jewel in the park.”

Hancher sits at the edge of the arts campus, on an open, expansive piece of land just west of the Iowa River. “Pelli Clarke Pelli is used to designing performing arts centers in dense, urban environments with little breathing room, so they were very taken by the river site,” says Thies. It shows. The curve of the river

became the backbone of the building, its eastern wall mirroring the banks’ bends. While the original Hancher sat at this same general site, that building faced north, away from the heart of campus – and away from the community. So PCP and OPN flipped it 180 degrees, opening the lobby to the river and all of campus.

On the exterior, brushed-satin, stainless-steel shingles line the building’s sinewy lines; a lovely contrast against the warm wooden beams that line the roofs. Droplet-like cantilevers at the south end of the building create overhangs for the lobby and a second-story terrace. Sweeping glass walls deliberately connect the exterior to the interior, which houses a 1,800-seat proscenium stage made for music, dance, opera, and theater – whether it’s a major Broadway roadshow or a one-man performance – and a host of multipurpose rooms ready for any occasion.

“When you’re in the new Hancher, you’re looking out at the whole university,” says Thies. “That’s a very powerful gesture.” The transparent nature of the building fosters connection – a core ethos for Hancher, perhaps best demonstrated through its lobby.

Abramovitz’s lobby was lovingly referred to as “the community’s living room,” says Thies. To honor Hancher and celebrate the venue’s many loyal patrons – patrons who hopped from venue to venue during those long eight years, supporting great work as Executive Director Chuck Swanson took Hancher on the road – Thies and the design team focused on the new community living room. “We wanted to encourage people to come early and stay late,” says Thies. “When you come out for a performance, there’s an artistic experience, a social experience, and then there’s the experience of being part of the spirit of Hancher.” The new lobby – airy, spacious, and inviting – harkens back to the original.

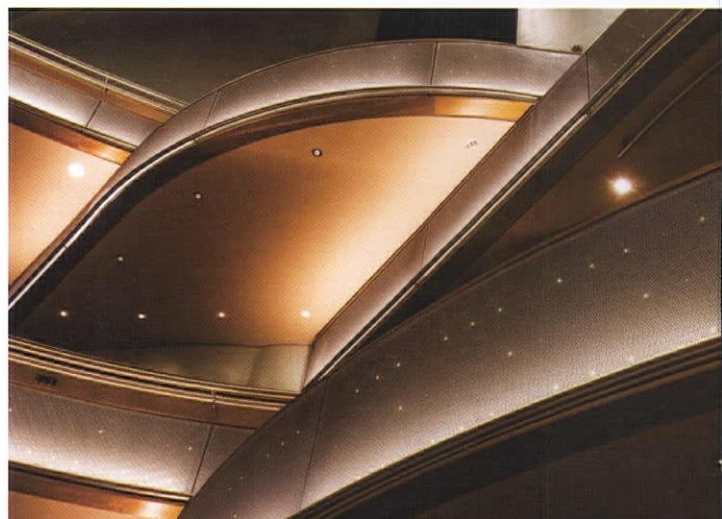
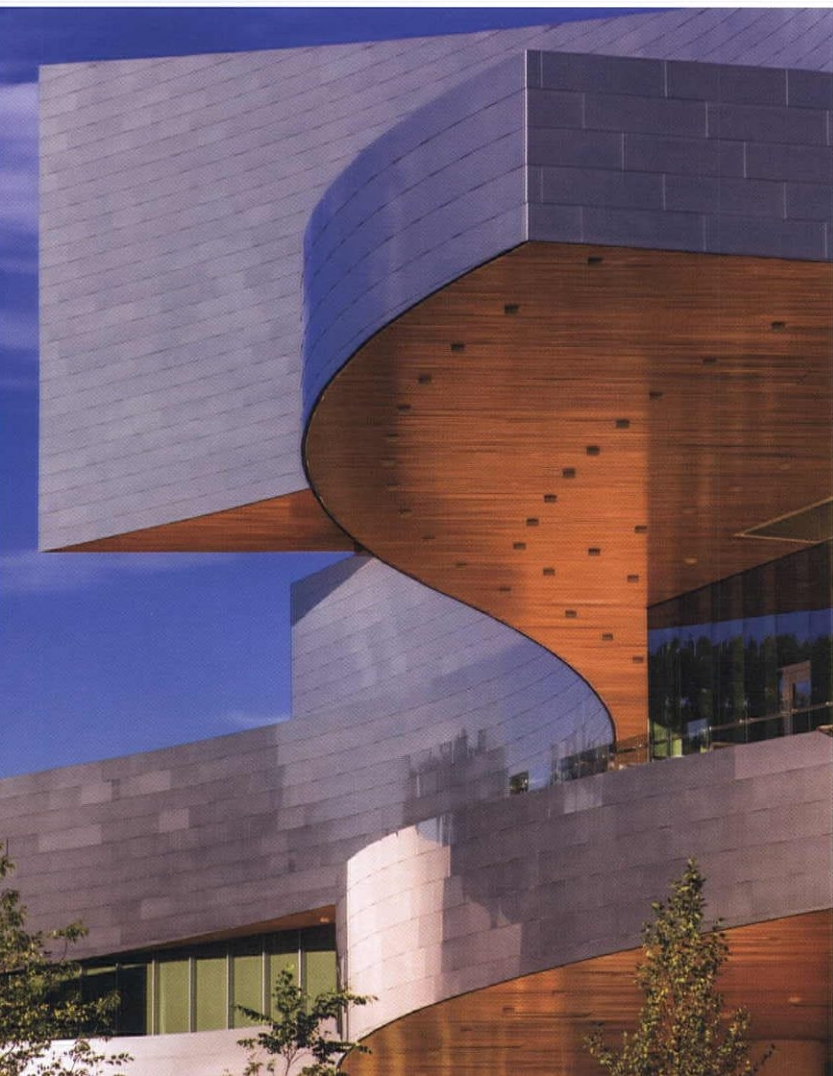
For Thies, giving the community back its living room was the bittersweet – but mostly sweet – reward at the end of more than six years of hard work. “Every once in awhile in life, something really, really special happens,” he says. “The opportunity to be part of such an extraordinary project with amazing collaborating colleagues and partners was one of those once-in-a-lifetime moments.”

Opposite: (clockwise) Hancher’s design draws from its natural surroundings; parallel forms cantilever south of the building, creating overhangs for the lobby and a second-level terrace.

Custom fixtures designed by Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design create an awe-inspiring ceiling, while front-of-balcony lights make the house sparkle and glow. Partial arcs of these fixtures adjacent to the perimeter walls create the illusion that the lighting extends beyond the theater.

Continuous solid wood linear plank ceilings extend from the outside in, where the remainder of the material palette is intentionally minimal.

Hancher’s form, massing, color, and material complement the adjacent Levitt Center, a limestone-clad asymmetrical composition of geometric forms. Cladding on Hancher Auditorium’s main structure is a stainless steel shingle with a brushed satin finish.





ADAPTED FOR MODERN USE

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY'S CENTURY-OLD MARSTON HALL
UNDERGOES 21ST-CENTURY RENOVATION

WORDS: LIZ LIDGETT IMAGES: PAUL CROSBY ARCHITECT: SUBSTANCE ARCHITECTURE

College campuses and their buildings are shrines to higher education and academia. These buildings must be designed to respect the alumni and faculty who have studied in the past, yet keep in step with current and future trends. Innovation is a necessary component to attract the best and brightest for any university. Prominently located on Iowa State University's campus, Marston Hall has been home to the College of Engineering since its completion in 1903. During that time, many individual maintenance, repair, and improvement projects had occurred but these were only a stopgap over time due to limited resources. In 2016, Substance Architecture took on the task of creating an overall vision to define how the historical building could accommodate ever-evolving technological and usage requirements.

"One of the fundamental shifts in pedagogy at Iowa State University is the shift away from traditional classrooms," says Paul Mankins, FAIA, principal at Substance. "As a result, the learning spaces at Marston Hall are technologically enabled to allow for capture, broadcast, and reception as well as group work. This allows lectures to be viewed outside of class times, as well as remote lectures to be viewed on site. In addition, collaboration between disciplines at Iowa State or with experts at other institutions is supported." Marston Hall, all 65,449 square feet of it, now speaks to the educational model that Iowa State promotes; one of interconnectivity and flexibility.

The four levels of this building have housed a variety of college and university functions over the past century-plus. The design team analyzed all building components from program distribution to technology integration to possible LEED points, and began to formulate strategies for renovating the building to fit its current needs. This analysis led to a reorganization of the colleges and organizations that occupy its halls. Home to Engineering Student Services, Career Services, and the College Administrative Office, each

Top: A grand entrance meets each visitor with a statement wall and the signature pops of red seen throughout the building. **Bottom:** A meeting room displays an engineering drawing for the well-known water tower that can be seen from the windows of Marston Hall.





Selective preservation keeps the historical character while introducing modern touches.

"The renovated Marston Hall both honors the College of Engineering's history and reflects the future of world-class engineering education."

— KERRY DIXON

were organized to optimize workflow and consolidation. This then opened up the second floor for learning and co-working spaces for students. New centrally located elevators ease access to all levels. These space layouts and locations were based on multiple discussions and reviews with the university's Facilities and College of Engineering staff. Planning and space design recommendations focused on comprehensive systems integration.

"Due to unprecedented growth and changes in pedagogy, Marston Hall needed to be reinvented," Mankins says. "The building had a few small, conventional classrooms that accommodated 30 students. The college needed larger, much more flexible classrooms that could accommodate 80 students. In addition, these new learning spaces needed to be

technologically enabled and equipped for capture. To meet these requirements, the building's north and south wings were restructured — removing a load-bearing wall — to increase the classroom size. In addition, technology was provided in each learning and co-working space to facilitate instruction and team collaboration." The building, quite simply, was brought to the 21st century.

Marston Hall is one of the oldest buildings on the Iowa State University campus and plays an important symbolic role for the College of Engineering. "It was critical that the character of the building be maintained, but reinvented to accommodate the college's changing needs," Mankins says. "While the building was symbolically important, it was rather utilitarian. As a result, the

"It was critical that the character of the building be maintained, but reinvented to accommodate the college's changing needs, while the building was symbolically important, it was rather utilitarian. As a result, the building's two ornate spaces — the entry rotunda and faculty reading room — were maintained and renovated. This strategy of 'selective preservation' allowed the rest of the building to be reconsidered without losing its historical character."

— PAUL MANKINS, FAIA



A modern look in the historical building, with red illustration of the iconic water tower.

two ornate spaces — the entry rotunda and faculty reading room — were maintained and renovated. This strategy of 'selective preservation' allowed the rest of the building to be reconsidered without losing its historical character."

The familiar façade of gray stone and its grand arched window and door remain. As you walk toward the front of the building — much of which remains unchanged since 1903 — you can see inside to a modern space. The combination of the historical, ornate iron staircase in the rotunda with the contemporary metal lighting touches on both the past and the future of the campus. Crisp, bright hallways are endcapped with large, red pop engineering imagery. One image shows the drawing of a water tower, the next a photograph of the water tower itself.

During the renovation, the building

became little more than a hollow shell. The building's original layout severely limited the size and flexibility of the building's interior spaces. To better accommodate the program requirements, the north and south wings of the building were completely restructured, which, in turn, significantly increased the size of spaces that could be accommodated in these new wings.

"The purpose of this renovation was to extend the life of Marston Hall while refocusing it on students and learning," says Mankins.

Kerry Dixon, Project Manager at Iowa State University, agrees. "The renovated Marston Hall both honors the College of Engineering's history and reflects the future of world-class engineering education. We preserved an historic building that has long symbolized the

distinguished reputation of the college, while we completely reimagined the space within the building to best equip students to tackle future engineering challenges." Iowa State University, and the College of Engineering specifically, has experienced exceptional growth in the last decade. The student body of the college has nearly doubled as the general student body of the university has grown by more than 30 percent.

Combining state-of-the-art user spaces with support systems creates an ideal learning and working environment, and sets the stage to promote the college as a preeminent engineering institution. These modifications will allow Marston Hall, a campus jewel, to continue to serve the college for centuries to come.

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THERE'S AN AUDITORIUM THERE

WORDS : COLE NORUM IMAGES : FARSHID ASSASSI ARCHITECT : BNIM ARCHITECTS

A BUILDING ON IOWA STATE'S CAMPUS
CONSIDERS ITS SURROUNDINGS AND STUDENTS

Somewhere in Ames, Iowa, near a greenhouse and the Farm House, is a big classroom beneath the ground. This is Troxel Hall, a high-performance learning space situated at the heart of Iowa State University's campus. Completed in 2013 by BNIM Architects, Troxel was the response to the university's desire for a space conducive to higher education that neither impeded nor competed with surrounding structures.

How did BNIM construct a space that avoided shading the greenhouse and obstructing views of the Farm House, a National Historic Landmark? "Even in our initial ideas, we had the genesis of the notion of pushing this building in the ground," says Jonathan Ramsey, AIA, the project's architect and manager. Sinking the classroom underground had a number of positive effects. "It certainly reduced the scale of the building," Ramsey says. Paradoxically, the reduced scale contributed directly to increased performance. "It allowed an easier flow of people into and out of the auditorium."

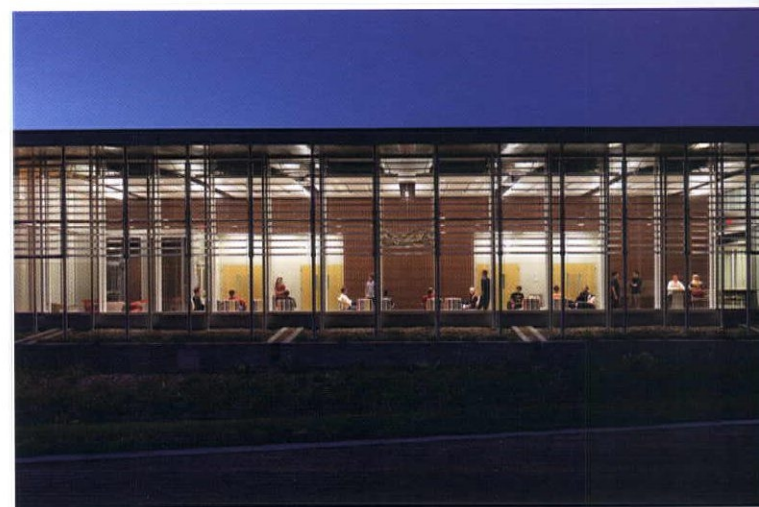
Troxel Hall is 30 percent bigger than standard lecture halls. "You won't find many standalone 400-person auditoriums on a college campus," Ramsey says. "Typically, they're connected to another building." The university asked BNIM to design the classroom so large lectures could break into smaller groups. Each of the auditorium's tiers feature two rows of seats, the front of which can swivel to face the back. Swaths of large aisles cut through the space, allowing instructors more room to navigate during group sessions.

Eleven entrances around the classroom allay possible congestion. "You almost don't even realize there's a class change happening, because it's so distributed and can happen so quickly," Ramsey says.

Not that students particularly want to leave. "Troxel is a beautiful space," says Lucy Holmes, a Communications Studies major. For Holmes, the building's clean and modern aesthetic contributes to its subtlety in the context of other campus structures. "It isn't in your face and grandiose."

Troxel Hall's roof is not entirely flat. It rises, dips, and smooths out in a series of slight juts. The auditorium's ceiling follows this geometry, enhancing the acoustics. The hall's northern end features a steep slope, which allows visibility of its vegetated roof from the ground and taller surrounding buildings. This vegetation reduces runoff and shields the auditorium from outside noise, eschewing the need for a concrete composite deck. For Ramsey, it is multiple layers of design-thinking, wrapped up in geometry. "Our approach is to pursue a strategy of human-purposed, integrated design," he says. "All the components of the building are working together."

How does \$13 million build something that fosters the growth of students without blocking sunlight to the plants? It is a microcosm of the collegiate notion. A problem occurs. A solution is needed. Differing perspectives are considered. Expounded upon. Challenged. Then work begins to shape a new idea and see it come to fruition. There is a dialogue throughout. Discussions between architects and faculty; administration and students. A lecture hall with maneuverable tables and chairs that encourage group sessions. A learning space born of the belief that collaboration is a very good thing.

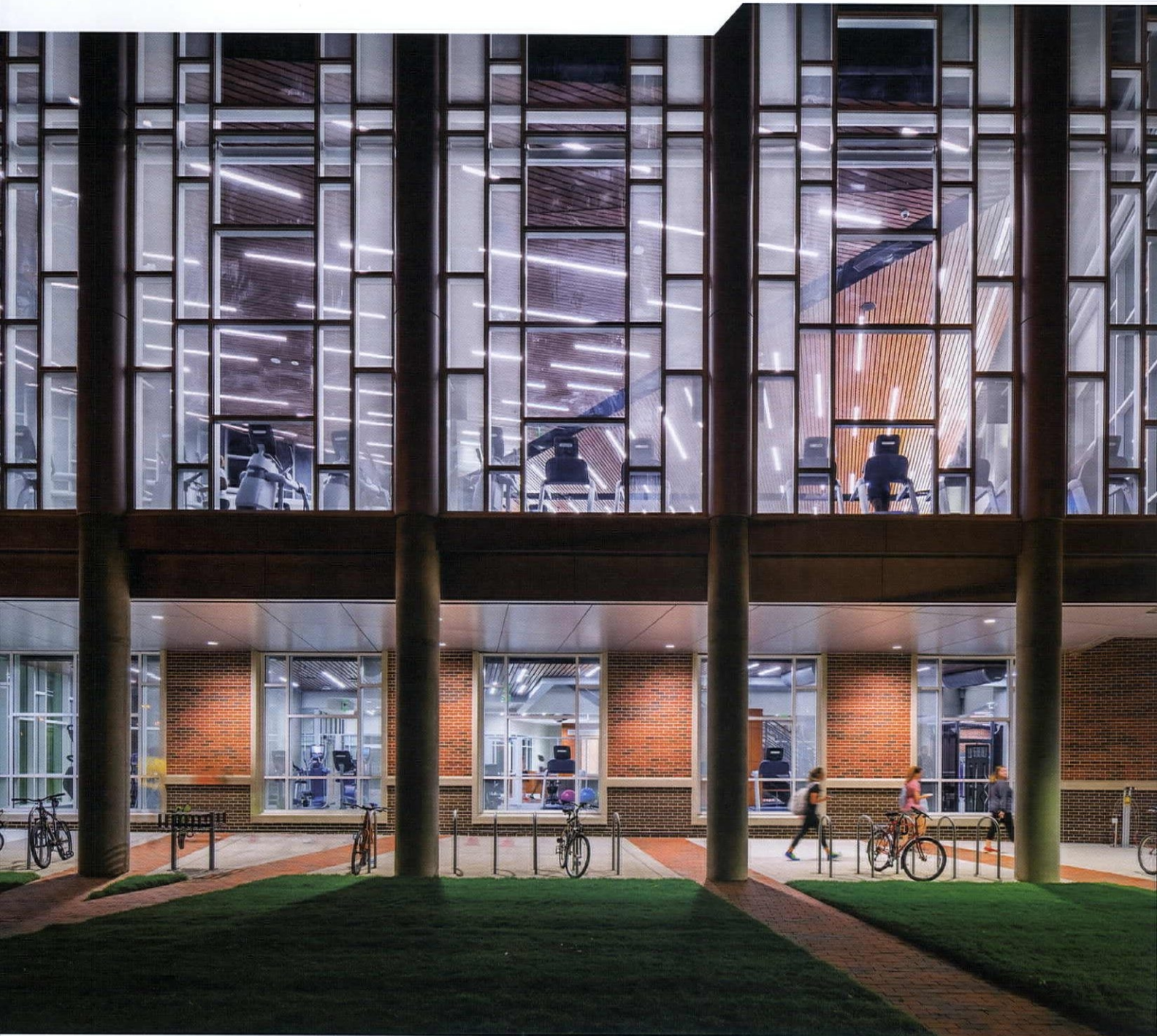


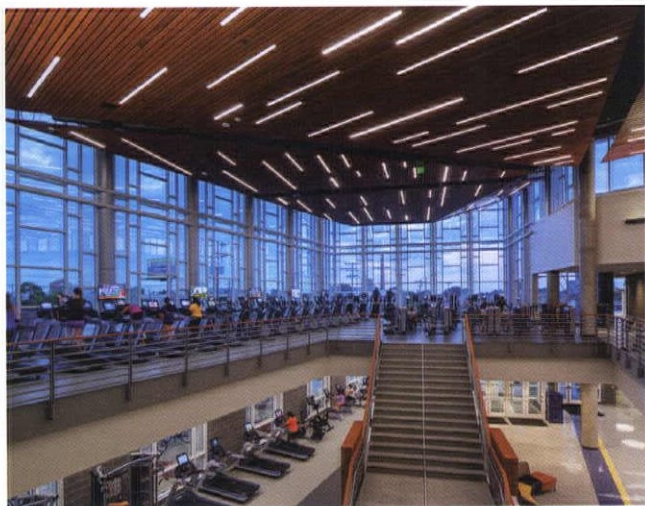
Opposite: BNIM pursued a strategy of human-purposed design in building Troxel Hall. **Above:** (top to bottom) Troxel Hall is 30 percent bigger than standard lecture halls, yet does not obstruct views of nearby structures; circulation space around Troxel Hall eases congestion and provides area to gather and study; Troxel Hall melds compelling form with functionality.

A CONSCIOUS CONCEPT for Campus and Community

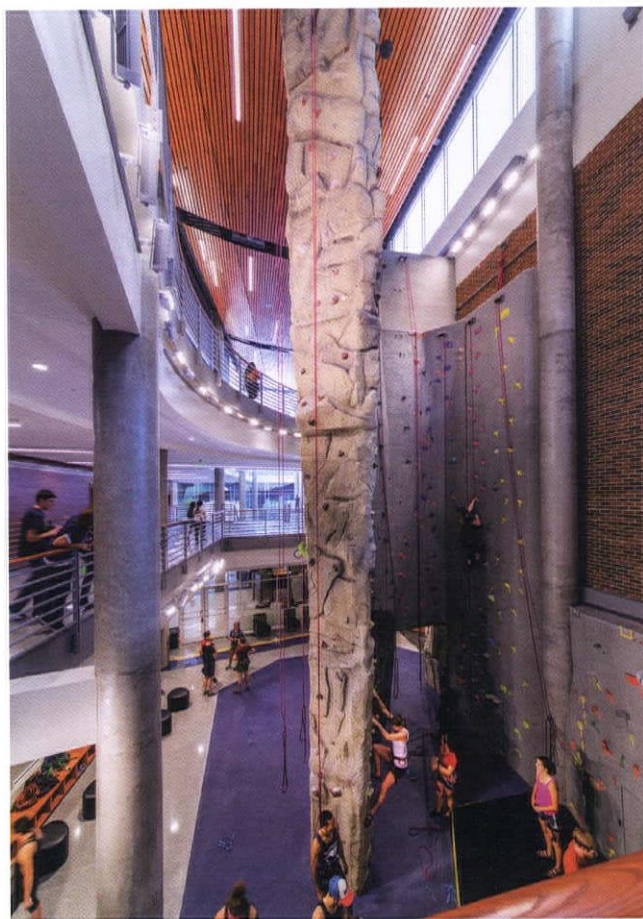
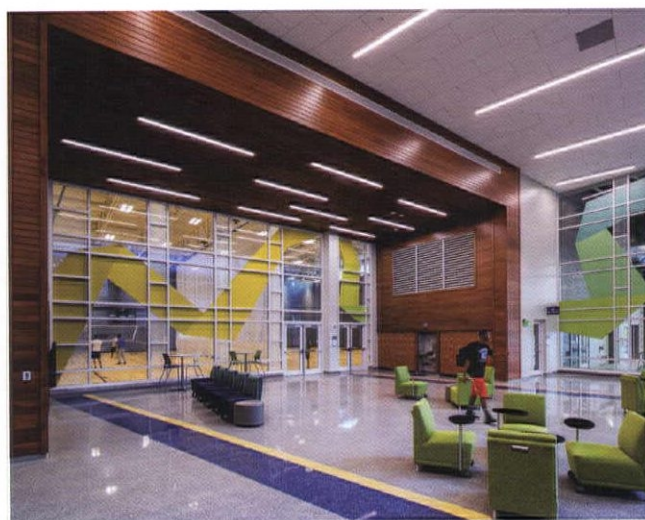
Quality of life, sustainability at the core of the University
of North Carolina Greensboro's new Center for Wellness

WORDS: LACY BRUNETTE
IMAGES: IRIS22 PRODUCTIONS
ARCHITECT: RDG PLANNING & DESIGN





Left: (clockwise) The center encompasses 23,000 square feet of cardio and weight-training space; a 54-foot climbing wall and adjoining bouldering wall are a pivot point within the center; group fitness studios and multi-purpose gyms host a variety of activities.



The new Leonard J. Kaplan Center for Wellness at the University of North Carolina Greensboro has “its own character but is clearly part of campus – built on so many of its attributes – including outdoor development,” says RDG Planning & Design principal Jack Patton, AIA.

UNC Greensboro commissioned RDG Planning & Design to design the Kaplan Center as part of a strategic urban expansion initiative and to encourage a culture of “Spartan Strength” and wellness. The building is situated on five and a half city blocks and came with the unique challenge of being separated from the original campus by railroad tracks, nestled on the other side amongst residential and business properties.

Special considerations needed to be taken to marry the traditional aspects of campus with innovative design elements, including a fully integrated visual and

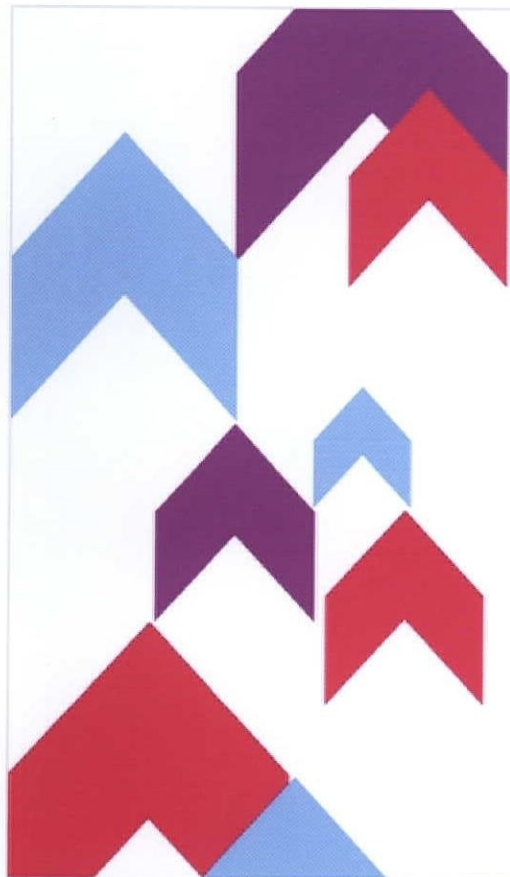
pedestrian connection. The south side of the property is bordered by a lush, modern landscape buffer that blends the property with the neighborhood. “It has visual strength, specifically in facing the north, visually calling out its connection across the railroad line,” says Patton.

“The new recreation and wellness center is an important and iconic anchor,” says Patton. “The campus is a great place of living and learning and activity, and it was imperative that the new building encompassed all parts of campus.”

The striking 216,000-square-foot structure is certified LEED Gold, and includes Bio-Retention Cells that function as an effective stormwater treatment system. Every ounce of water that lands on-site is managed on-site; rainwater is collected under the entrance plaza and remains on-site before being “given up” to the city. The Kaplan Center’s architectural

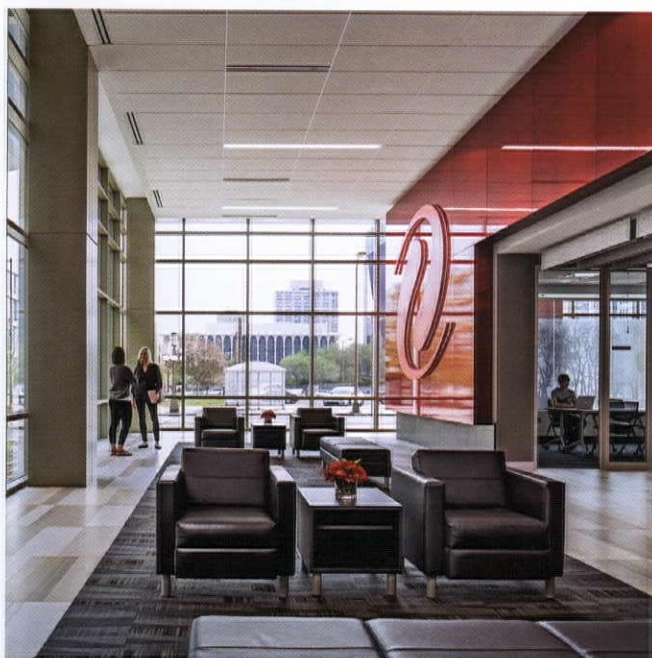
design was cultivated from well-known best practices of collegiate sustainability from proper lighting to vertical stacking within the building, and tools and resources included in the building all contribute to energy management.

Sustainability doesn’t stop at the building’s features; it continues to the cultural core of campus and contributes to a thriving quality of life for students. The Kaplan Center is an epicenter of wellness resources, from TRX and high-intensity cycling studios to an aquatics suite. An exercise space is designated to the Spartan Terrace outdoor patio, so that yoga class participants can enjoy the early morning sunlight. Students can touch the climbing wall while being 30-feet above it. “It has an organization along one central axis, so that guests can shop a variety of experiences from north to south of the building,” says Patton.



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A serene modernist composition reflected in water represents the ideal contrast of the natural and built environment.

FANFARE FOR THE COMMON STUDENT

WORDS: MARK BLUNCK, HON. AIA IOWA IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA ARCHITECT: INVISION ARCHITECTURE

The educational system in Iowa continues to rank among the finest in the nation. This successful attribute is the result of determined state and school officials – at all levels – in recognizing the importance of learning and the successful application of that experience. While attention is focused primarily on large state universities with their renowned scholastic and athletic reputations, the community college system is equally important, providing affordable education to a wide array of students. One such establishment is the North Iowa Area Community College in Mason City, which holds the distinction of being the oldest such institution in the state, having been established in 1918 as Mason City Junior College.

The college commissioned INVISION Architecture to create a master plan

as a comprehensive strategic effort to address issues surrounding shifting demographics, aging infrastructure, and changing academic needs. An essential component of this ambitious 10-year plan was to design and build new dormitory housing for nearly 400 students. INVISION Architecture Principal Michael Bechtel, AIA, acknowledged that the transient nature of the customary two-year student duration makes it difficult for students to establish long-lasting relationships. A new approach was needed.

A tranquil rural lake setting is the perfect natural set piece for this refined interpretation of modernist design following the object-on-landscape principle utilized in much of 20th-century architecture. The 103,000-square-foot structure is composed of two nearly identical dormitory wings and a center

communal space connecting the private living spaces. The building footprint strangely resembles an open isosceles triangle. “This gesture was meant to respond to the lakes and open views back across campus,” says Bechtel, “while providing a terminal view from the academic campus side.”

The rather significant slopes at the project site presented the challenge of reconfiguring the traditional floor-level living spaces into two-story volumes connecting at half-floor levels. This is resolved by a sectional shift in the elongated dormitory wings, which resolves the slope demands and addresses the common floor level community isolation. This was a welcome attribute noted by students during post occupancy discussions. “This project intentionally challenges the often misplaced opinion

that community colleges are just about job training” says Bechtel, “and sets up the Mason City institution as a leader in what is possible with student living environments in Iowa.”

The most architecturally expressive component is the steel- and glass-framed community space illustrating the finest aspects of modern architecture. The modernist ideals of openness and natural illumination are evident throughout this space, and the industrial character is tempered by richly colored wood slat ceilings, providing a warm inviting contrast to the exposed white structural beams. This is a space to see and be seen as the crystalline qualities encourage personal interaction. “I like the idea of expressing the systems and letting the necessary building components serve as the finishes,” says Bechtel. “It’s a great transparent space that welcomes everyone and allows no one to be a stranger. There is a certain beauty in connecting people through architecture.”

I wish to thank the many architects, editors, and publishers in the past 30 years who have provided me with the opportunity to express my interest in architecture and design. Farewell.

— Mark E. Blunck, Hon. AIA Iowa



Publisher’s Note: We appreciate all that Mark Blunck, Hon. AIA Iowa, has done for the magazine and the profession. His many interesting and colorful articles over 30+ years have enhanced the magazine and as he is retiring, we will miss him greatly!



Top Left: Glass bridge over entrance portal. **Top Right:** Covered entry with open elliptical oculus. **Bottom:** The tiered outdoor “campus living room” was designed for small and large group gatherings, impromptu outdoor classrooms, and a relaxing area for tossing Frisbees and footballs.

project credits

University of Iowa Hancher Auditorium | 16

Architect: OPN Architects
Design Architect: Pelli Clarke Pelli
Location: Iowa City, Iowa
Structural Engineer: Thorton Tomasetti
Acoustics: Theatre Projects, Kirkegaard
Theatre Design: Theatre Projects
Photographer: Jeff Goldberg

Iowa State University Marston Hall | 20

Architect: Substance Architecture
Location: Ames, Iowa
Contractor: Mortenson Construction
MEP Engineer: KJWW Engineering
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes
Civil Engineer: Snyder & Associates
LEED Consultant: C-Wise Design and Consulting
Photographer: Paul Crosby

Iowa State University Troxel Hall | 26

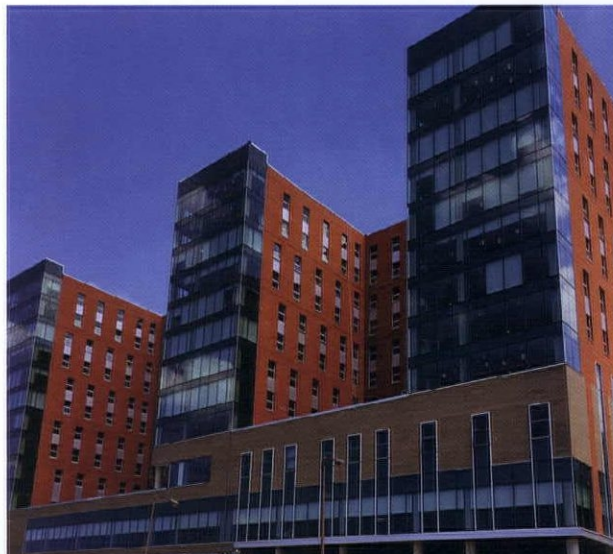
Architect: BNIM Architects
Location: Ames, Iowa
Contractor: Oakview dck
Engineer: Raker Rhodes Engineering
MEP Engineer: Henneman Engineering Inc
Civil Engineer: Snyder & Associates
AV Consultant: Sextant Group
Photographer: Farshid Assassi

University of North Carolina Greensboro Kaplan Center for Wellness | 28

Architect: RDG Planning & Design
Secondary Firm: Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce Architects
Location: Greensboro, North Carolina
Contractor: Skanska Rentenbach
MEP Engineer: McCracken & Lopez
Photographer: IRIS22 Productions

North Iowa Community College Student Housing | 32

Architect: INVISION Architecture
Location: Mason City, Iowa
Contractor: Henkel Construction Company
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes Engineering
MEP Engineer: MODUS
Civil Engineer: Yaggy Colby Associates
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA



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